The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE

"IT IS a dangerous thing to throw the religious issue into any campaign," said Mr. Hamilton, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, at a press conference in New York recently, at which he threw out the charge that the Democratic party's managers had started a "whispering campaign" intended to capitalize anti-Jewish prejudice against the Republican presidential candidate, Governor Landon, in the West, by insinuating that he is a Jew because his middle name is "Mossman," and simultaneously to excite Jewish prejudice against him in New York by spreading stories that Jews were being politically ostracized by the Republicans' high command. Now, no doubt, Mr. Hamilton will himself be accused of having dragged in this religious issue—in the sense that he brought it out into the full light of publicity. At any rate, whoever may be mainly responsible for bringing into the campaign this "dangerous thing," there it is now, and it will poisonously inflame emotions, and stir up hatred, just at the time when not emotion but informed reason is the instrument which American voters ought to employ.

Nor are the supposed (or real) whispering campaign about Governor Landon in the West, and the turmoil in New York concerning opposition to the Jews, the only signs that indicate the unloosing of religious and racial prejudices and hatreds and suspicions in the presidential campaign. Dr. L. M. Birkhead, a Unitarian clergyman in Kansas City, Missouri, as the result of a personal investigation provoked by the recent "Black Legion" exposure in Michigan, reports that no less than ten secret or semi-secret and quasi-Fascist organizations can be found in his city, and in many other cities and towns of the Middle West, all of them devoted to the purpose of stirring up and organizing prejudice against "Jews, Catholics, Negroes and Communists," and

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all of them linked up in one way or another with political activities in the presidential campaign.

How serious the danger represented by this unloosing of religious, racial and class antagonisms may become, as the campaign proceeds, is unpredictable; but that it potentially is very great cannot be doubted. These prejudices and hatreds exist. They will be unscrupulously exploited by demagogs and cynical and unprincipled politicians, as they were in 1928, and in other years of political excitement. The good sense and fair-minded qualities of normal Americans must strive to provide an antidote for these poisons.

For Catholic citizens, at least, irrespective of their political affiliations, there is a religious issue in this campaign far transcending the mischievous bigotries and prejudices referred to above. It is the issue of their own fundamental moral attitude, or point of view, by which it is their unquestionable duty to regulate their political actions—not only their votes, and their party loyalties and service, but their thinking about the great economic and social problems of today which underlie all the political struggles. In this sense, religion is of the very essence of their political action. How they are to apply their religion to politics, not arbitrarily, nor in any partizan manner, is clearly taught by their Church. It is expressed most simply yet with power in a letter addressed by Archbishop McNicholas of Cincinnati to all the Catholics of his diocese, to be read at all Masses in all churches on some Sunday of this month. We do not know whether other Catholic bishops of the United States have taken similar action, or contemplate doing so, but we are convinced that what the Archbishop of Cincinnati has to say is in substance identical with what any Catholic bishop would say, simply because it is the voice of the Church.

Archbishop McNicholas, first of all, calls all his priests, religious, and faithful laity to pray "that God may guide the voters in the November elections. . . . The Church . . . expresses no preference for political parties, groups or individuals. Its concern is to urge prayers between now and the November elections. Priests are asked to remember in their Masses every morning the welfare of our country and to pray God that the crisis now threatening may be averted. The faithful are urged to pray daily to the Holy Ghost that voters may recognize their dependence on God and seek Divine light and guidance in the momentous decisions which they, as individuals, must make according to their conscience."

For, that a great crisis now impends, the Archbishop does not doubt. Nor does he hesitate to pierce through all secondary or lesser causes of that crisis to the chief cause of all human calamities—namely, religious indifference; a turning away from God, and the moral law established by God. What is most distressing in our present situation, the Archbishop says, is that "solutions have not been sought under the guidance of Divine Providence. God should be acknowledged as the Supreme Ruler of America. While thanking God that our country is not opposed to religion, we must deplore the fact that it is indifferent to religion. Religious indifference over any long period can only have the most disastrous consequences. There is no thought of suggesting that our country set up a state religion. We must thank God for the structure of our government which insures freedom of religion. But we must go a step farther. We must have the encouragement of our government for the religious instruction of the youth of the land according to a plan which can and will satisfy all groups. Unless such measures are taken our country cannot be saved from the horrors of revolution which must inevitably come through failure to build up morally individuals of all groups who will establish religious homes that are the foundation of every enduring government."

Prayer in politics is a prescription which will no doubt excite the ribald laughter of many Americans. That fact is a measure of what is wrong with American life, of which its bedlamite politics is a grotesque yet faithful reflection. Neither voting for the Left (radicalism) against the Right (conservative), nor for the Right against the Left, however, will avail to save America. Only voting for the right against the wrong, will avail. But men cannot know what is right or wrong by their own vision alone. Only the guidance of God can be trusted—that guidance which is given by God through His Church.

Week by Week

SELDOM has there been greater uncertainty about the immediate future of the farmer than has prevailed during a week of sizzling heat.

The Trend of Events

Predictions that there would be virtually no crop were followed by guesses that a bumper harvest might be reaped after all. Meat and milk, to be sure, will in all probability be scarcer and dearer. Under the circumstance, the federal agencies were necessarily in a quandary. No money was available to subsidize burnt-out farmers directly, and in regions badly affected work relief was being offered. There were fewer predictions that a wholesale migration of families in the "dust bowl" would be attempted. Politically agrarian groups in areas where high prices for land have been followed by depression conditions were obviously answering the appeal of Townsendism. A sufficient number of local elections have demonstrated what most people hesitated to believe—that the good Doctor

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and his lieutenants can put up a stiff fight at the polls. More generally straw votes and polls continued to reveal a trend toward Mr. Landon. A few weeks ago, the drift was the other way, and in a few more there may be another flurry for Mr. Roosevelt. We believe that the solid masses of old party voters have already made up their minds, but that an increasingly large intermediate group has by no means reached a decision and remains unusually sensitive to news and personal impressions. It appears fairly certain that the Philadelphia convention helped the Democrats not at all, and that the President must do some stellar campaigning if he hopes to emerge with a smashing victory. There is reason to believe that he will.

MOST journals are edited primarily for city dwellers, who unavoidably find it difficult to imagine what a drought really is. Perhaps nobody really knows excepting the man with the hoe—which in these days is, of course, a corn-plow or a binder. The sun brings life to the fields. Without hot nights, Iowa corn would never ripen before frost. During a broiling afternoon, alfalfa can be cured within an inch of perfection. All this exacts a human toll, of course. During summer there is seldom much fun on a farm, especially now that agriculture is a business which keeps a steady eye on both sides of the ledger. Sometimes there is too little heat, too much rain. Then again the whole country seems a roaring furnace. No moisture falls to drench the soil. Men, beasts and plants suffer torment, and of the three only man survives. A farm on which no plant any longer lives, where cattle slink along like living skeletons, where people go into the cellars for a respite of coolness, is a horrible sight. Part of the tragedy, enacted during recent years in such wholesale fashion, is of course inevitable. Nature has her brutal moods, and will not be gainsaid. But part is also the result of human error, individual and collective. It is too easily forgotten that many of the blunders made are traceable to government action. During the war, feverish desire to increase production led "authorities" to encourage denudation of forests and gambling on acreage. Previously, in order to open up new territories, families were encouraged to homestead lands which should never have been put under cultivation. With these community mistakes, individual farmers have cooperated only too readily. We need a new long-term plan for the nation's agriculture. This is not something which will produce results in a year; it is obviously not something to be attained without cost. Will America have the patience and courage for such an undertaking? The answer depends upon whether sufficiently aggressive local leadership can be mustered in a number of states.

When the Sun Beats Down

RUMORS of an impending change in Austro-German relations were so plentiful that the actual treaty seems a bit of an anti-climax. Some expected outright seizure of Austria by the Nazis; others guessed that a desperate Hapsburg coup might be attempted. As expounded in the press, the agreement guarantees the independence of Austria and does not abrogate the 1934 Austro-Italian pact. Various trade and diplomatic barriers are to be removed. Any number of explanations are offered. Our guess is that Germany is planning to go back to the Brüning-Curtius policy of a customs union between the two countries. This probably cannot be brought about in the manner outlined in 1931, but by reaching a financial agreement. A "mark bloc" which would bind Austrian currency to the German currency has, as a matter of fact, been discussed in connection with Dr. Schacht's recent tour of the Balkans. Probably the fundamental prerequisite would be a widely extended system of barter, with the figuring done in gold marks. In time this system might ally southeastern Europe economically with the Reich. It is at all events clear that Mussolini was not able to underwrite Austria, or to establish anything remotely like an Italo-Danubian economic policy. This seems to us more important in the long run than any immediate diplomatic success Italy may have gained. If Germany can make money, it will outlast an Italy which does not make money. This point is demonstrated by the rapidity with which the British have shifted their alignment. London's decision to stop at nothing short of effective rearmament means very simply that the horoscope used in Downing Street predicts that the major danger lies in Berlin.

Changing Europe

A CURIOUS dispensation governs the City of New York—largest, richest, most progressive in the world. Strangers from obscure hamlets wrinkle brows of disgust at the litter in our streets. When the wind is right, our garbage is odoriferous on land and sea. Our byways, especially in summertime, are filled with foodless (and what is worse, drinkless) cats. Our waterways, among the proudest miracles of nature, a system of rivers and bays capable of furnishing sport, healthful recreation and esthetic stimulus to all our teeming population, are so polluted as to be little better than open sewers. The latest item in this queer category has to do with our school playgrounds. Hundreds of them, which are desperately needed by the child population of the city, have been closed because of a lack of the money necessary for hiring supervisors. About $250,000 is wanted, and not forthcoming; hence the children are playing in the streets, to the irri-

New York Saga

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tation of pedestrians and motorists, and their own moral and physical hurt. For the life of us, we cannot see why it is so material for the city to save this particular $250,000. Doubtless there are technical difficulties to be gotten around if the playground budget is depleted; but it suggests nothing but "Alice in Wonderland," or the Chancery Courts of "Bleak House," to say that these difficulties could not actually be gotten around, if someone were determined enough to do it. Even the argument of costs is against the present arrangement, as the director of extension activities points out. To say nothing of the three children who have already been killed in the neighborhood of one of the closed playgrounds, or of the permanent moral harm incurred by street gangdom, the dollars-and-cents price of the court procedures, reformatory commitments and medical aid which are the certain alternative to keeping playgrounds open is much greater than all our supervisors' salaries put together.

Dr. Cadman

SURELY there will be no Christian, of whatever denomination, outside the ranks of those who mourn the passing of Dr. S. Parkes Cadman. We believe he rendered a great service to Catholics—and that he was well aware of doing so. In the first place, though he was a man of innumerable sermons and addresses, he was not an "orator" but a kind of talking columnist with a rare gift for pithy and witty expression. He knew how to tell people things without swamping them with words, the sole final result of which would have been that he left an impression of "brilliance." Again, he wrote a great many books but was by no means what anybody would term a scholar; and the consequence was that, thinking as he read, he passed on more solid information and helpful counsel than any other Protestant clergyman of his time. Because he was these things, he managed somehow to arrive at a position intermediate between Fundamentalism and Modernism; and it was precisely this point of view which the urban area he served required if the average Protestant was to retain a semblance of Christian orthodoxy. The result was a survival of ethical and spiritual conviction that cannot be overestimated as an ally of Catholic life. Dr. Cadman could not force back the tide of paganism single-handed, but he defended an island against it skilfully and magnanimously. All this was not unconscious. Few men realized better than he did that upon what he called the Church of Rome depends largely the fate of dissident Christian faiths in modern America. His desire to foster cooperation within practical limits was no mere consequence of broad-mindedness. It was the fruit of reason and experience. He was refreshingly free of sentimentality, and admirably hard-headed.

Red Strains

POLITICAL direct action has reached its ultimate in Spain with the murder by night of Deputy José Calvo Sotelo, whose courageous indictment before the Cortes of the state of disorder in Spain we reported briefly in the Seven Days' Survey last week. He was a monarchist and he was a Catholic. His constituency of Orense, in Galicia, thought well enough of him to elect him to the Cortes while he was an exile in France and to reelect him in the general election last February when the Popular Front won sweeping victories in most parts of Spain. He was accused, without any proof forthcoming, of being a Fascist and of being implicated in an assassination the night previous to his own death attributed to the Fascists, who are alleged to have been avenging another murder, in turn, attributed to the anti-Fascists. So the pathological state of politics proceeds and the end no one knows. Two days after his death, Señor Sotelo was to have interpellated the government further on the public order—on the steady increase in strikes, street violence, deaths, unchecked and unpunished incendiarism, general economic breakdown and the very type of political disorder of which he finally was a victim. He had given notice, in due parliamentary form, to the Speaker of the Cortes of his intention to so interpellate. In his previous address, as we reported, he stressed the hidden government of the Communists in Spain and of their highly disciplined "Red Guard" who are able to thwart the maintenance of the public peace operation of the Civil Guard, chargeable, overt and responsible arm of the ostensible and responsible government. To those at a little distance who do not have to suffer the shocks, the tragedies, that are the human experiential aspects of this sort of thing, there should be in it some sobering, objective lessons.

Mr. Ridder Retires

WE CANNOT let Mr. Victor Ridder's retirement as director of the WPA organization go unnoticed: his achievement was both an individual feat against great personal odds, and a collective experiment in how to clear a path through one very tangled thicket of our democracy. He sincerely believed that public works afforded the only dependable way out for large numbers of innocently distressed people, and he devoted all his gift for civic strategy to the job. If more men of his ability would give part of their lives to important communal efforts, our society might reasonably hope to be proof against revolutionary attack. The curious fact is that he had a lot of fun being administrator, and that it was also fun watching him toil.

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PEOPLE, PRESS AND PROPAGANDA

By DONALD ATTWATER

What is the function of the Catholic press in the modern world? There have been many answers. Mr. Attwater's is based on a great deal of practical experience against an English background. In the present paper—the first of two—he is concerned primarily with the impressions of Catholicism which the press conveys to those outside the Church. Catholics, he writes, are judged by what Catholics say. The criticism he offers is sure to arouse much comment, and this is cordially invited.—The Editors.

IT is often asked: "What exactly is the value to the Church of the Catholic press? What is the ideal Catholic weekly?" And the questions are more difficult to answer than at first sight they appear to be. The very definition of the terms is not easy.

"Press," no doubt, is generally meant in the sense of the Vatican exhibition, as periodical press, and by "weekly" a weekly newspaper of some sort is usually intended. But "Church"? "Catholic"?

The universal Church of Christ, though commonly called the Catholic Church, has not in fact any one official name. She is the company of believers, a mystical body; and her members are of two kinds, those who belong to her visibly and those who belong to her invisibly. And in considering the value of the press to the Church and what would constitute an ideal weekly, we have to take into consideration those people who are invisibly members of the Church. Their names are known only to God, but we must assume (we have no right to do otherwise) that they are roughly identical in Great Britain and the United States with those (considered as individuals) whom we call non-Catholics. Large numbers of them are undoubtedly baptized, and we may not question without solid reason their good faith or the invincibility of their ignorance, in virtue of which they are united with the visibly faithful in Christ.

The Catholic press should be conducted on the assumption that it will be read by non-Catholics—and if so conducted with intelligence and charity it will be read by them. I am personally acquainted with quite ordinary Quakers and other dissenters, as well as "indifferents" and unbelievers, who regularly read certain Catholic journals—and "read not in order to contradict and to confute," to use Bacon's phrase about studies.

In relation to non-Catholics the value of the press to the Church is to enrich the spiritual and temporal lives of those non-Catholics, and thus to strengthen them in goodness and perhaps to lead them to visible unity with the Church. You can call this "propaganda" if you like. (This unhappy word, so often applied to the basest and most foolish activities, is derived from the Congregatio Sacra de Propaganda Fide at Rome, which in English means the Sacred Congregation for the Spreading of the Faith.) I prefer to call it preaching the Gospel, spreading the good news of Christ. The more it is consciously propaganda the less likely it is to do good to those whom it is intended to benefit; and non-Catholic Christians in England must not be talked to as if they were heathens in central Africa.

Cardinal Newman and many before and after him urged us to "convert by our lives." Of course, a religion should be judged on its own merits, but it is most often judged by the words and actions of its professors. So non-Catholics judge Catholicity by Catholics, not only, or even principally, for our success or failure in resisting the temptation of the more obvious and showy sins, but from our behavior in the day-to-day intercourse of life, especially with themselves—and in our press. Herein their instinct is right; for, devastating as are the effect of the more simple and crude immoralities, yet pride and uncharitableness and the other sins of the spirit are yet more deadly to the soul and disastrous in their results for others.

When circumstances require, the press must affirm the doctrine and moral teaching of the Church. But this duty is not fulfilled by giving non-Catholics the impression that we think they are entirely deprived of all religious truth, that they are wandering in a chaotic ignorance from which they could emerge if they really wanted to; nor do we aid them by hurling at them chunks of dogma. That the dogma is true does not help; if a man has his head broken it is no consolation that it was with a lump of gold rather than half a brick.

For example, non-Catholics are unable to believe that we can know a thing is right or wrong "because the Church says so." We want no better reason—there is no better reason—but they do not see it like that; if they did they would not be non-Catholics. A thing that we know to be lawful is sometimes wickedness in their eyes. This imposes a grave obligation of prudence on the press, lest we wantonly allow our lawful acts to be an occasion of real scandal to our non-Catholic brethren.

When the late Chancellor Dollfuss was cleaning up Socialists in Vienna, a Catholic review printed a letter stating: "When a man's faith is menaced it cannot be without danger to his immortal soul. Since there was no other way of removing the menace, Dollfuss would have been justified on this score alone in blowing the Socialists to pieces."

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That was a most crude and michief-making statement of an alleged solution to a delicate problem. That crude unguarded statement was, I know, read by non-Catholics and accepted by them as a certain and sufficient account of what the Church of Christ says and approves in a matter of this sort; with the inevitable result that their minds received one more twist away from the Church. In seeking to affirm truth that writer succeeded only in dissuading people from seeking it in the Catholic Church.

In considering the effect of our writing on non-Catholics we have to have two things above all, sympathy and humility. We have first to stress and explore our common ground before we take account of our differences. And too many of us write and talk as if no grace were given outside the Church; yet Pope Clement XI, in the bull "Unigenitus," condemned that proposition as false.

A special word must be given to controversy. Controversy between Catholic and non-Catholic has its value, its lawful use and its place—but in my opinion its place in unspecialized publications intended for general reading should be very limited and strictly controlled. Controversy tends to bring out some of the worst traits in people; very often it has its origin and motive not in a zeal for God's truth but unconsciously in a desire to demonstrate that I know what is right, that our (or worse, my) church alone has got the truth, or simply that the other fellow is wrong. The Church cannot be served in that way; and it is my considered opinion that controversy on important matters (on unimportant matters it is puerile) is like war, very difficult to wage without sin and without doing more harm than good. When I say controversy I do not mean simply discussion, though no doubt the line is often difficult to draw. The energy devoted to newspaper controversy could nearly always be more fruitfully used in other ways.

On the other hand, I would allow rather more to controversy between Catholics, provided it be disinterested. For one thing, it helps to convince non-Catholics that we really are, outside a relatively small space of revealed belief and conduct with their implications, free as the air to discuss and charitably to disagree about things; for another, it serves to break down the notion that Catholics should aim at a sort of universal uniformity of opinion on all matters. Moreover, many of us have got to get out of the habit of thinking or implying that the fellow Catholic who holds unusual views or differs from our own must be at least materially a heretic or an evil liver!

In writing for Catholics it is not necessary for me to refer to the part that the authority of our pastors plays, or may play, in all these matters, except to say this: that part of the work of a newspaper should be to explain (with due safeguards) the wishes and orders of that authority, and not to be simply a megaphone.

In relation to Catholics, the value of the press to the Church is to enrich the spiritual and temporal lives of those Catholics, and thus to strengthen them in goodness and to confirm them in their allegiance to our Lord and His Church.

A general weekly need not devote much space, if any, to formally spiritual matters and personal edification, because the primary and normal channels of these are the sacred liturgy and the ministry of the word; there are, moreover, many periodicals specifically devoted to this object.

We Catholics sometimes boast that we do not make of religion a thing for Sundays only, to which I have heard it retorted, "No, but you keep it within the walls of your churches." Some of us certainly have a habit of associating the ideas of religion, virtue and so on too exclusively with what is ecclesiastical or formally religious, and acting as if the rest did not matter at all. We hint, sometimes say, that if a book is good it does not matter what the binding is like, that it is trifling to object if Mass vestments are put on less carefully than a dress-tie, that material things and secular activities have no sort of value in themselves but only as means to ends. Yet we use the same word, "goodness," for the perfection of God and for the perfection of material and "worldly" things, and not without reason, for "the beauty of God is the cause of the being of all that is," as Saint Thomas says. There is an old saying that there is nothing secular except sin; everything, in fact, that is not sinful or erroneous (an ugly thing is erroneous, but it is not necessarily ugly because you or I think so) is good, that is, so to say, Catholic.

The "ideal" Catholic weekly will, then, concern itself with anything and everything that is of legitimate interest to man within the limits of its scope, whether as an ecclesiastical newspaper, a general "cultural" paper, a review, or a "secular" newspaper. To take the last only, it will talk about sport and natural science, the theatre and the cinema and broadcasting and music and books and the home, and current affairs at home and abroad, and of these things not solely in relation to the confessional or to "church defense." In recording news it will not try to rival the daily papers (because it can't), but it can find general news of its own, report things that are elsewhere suppressed for inadequate reasons, and give precisions and amplifications of other reports. Nor because it is a "secular" paper will it fail to report those religious events that are of importance to everybody (whether everybody knows it or not), such as a papal encyclical, a beatification, a remarkable sermon, which are as much news as a battle or a murder.

Man is composed of spirit and matter, both real and both good; the ideal Catholic paper will be concerned for the whole man, appeal to the whole man.

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G. K. CHESTERTON

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

HE was first of all a great, a good, a singularly unworldly man. It is hard to believe there could be such a one, until after he is gone. Money for Chesterton was nothing at all. Reputation was merely a kind of rod with which he could fish in waters not to be reached otherwise. Literary skill? Yes, he had extraordinarily much of that, but he was strangely without the desire to dominate by reason of it. It apparently cost him no more effort to write a poem than to do three hundred words for some random body who asked for them. During all these years his essays came to us without any strings attached. He took what we could give him without apparently thinking of what he gave us in return. It was that way always, with everything. There must have been times when he was very tired, very bored, even very sad. But he never seemed to know it because he was both very much in earnest and very much amused about life.

I hope these things will not be forgotten. Not since the eighteenth century (for Dickens' try was a failure) did a man of letters, an intellectual, so manage to remind us all of what personality is. Most of our literary gentlemen are machines. They gear themselves to turn out a certain product, for art's sake or profit's. They talk about their sales, their methods, their ideas, their art. The best of them are craftsmen; the worst go in for mass production. But their biographies are all singularly alike, and so ultimately are their achievements. They were read, and they died. Just as bees gather honey and die. Surely now and then a literary man can afford to be a Man. He can forget about his secretions and concentrate upon himself. Mr. Chesterton forgot and concentrated. It is simply impossible to overestimate the effectiveness of that example during the past forty years. We shall, therefore, not be sorry that he has gone. We shall remember that he has been.

If we go on to think briefly about the books he wrote, there is no way out of conceding that each is a fragment of a whole. Few will long stand erect by themselves. You read Chesterton because you want to read Chesterton, not because you are overwhelmed, let us say, by "The Everlasting Man." Even the scintillant style is not interesting for its own sake, since those who relish style—the practitioners—must avoid his like the plague. He didn't simply turn proverbs upside down, but almost everybody who reads too much Chesterton will find himself turning proverbs upside down. His paradoxes are as contagious as the adjectives of Keats. Would to God that lesser scribes would stay away from both!

As a writer Chesterton came out of the 1890's. That era of art consciousness, of moral decadence, of intellectualist ultra-liberalism, of pleasantly sad reflection upon the victory of evolution over the theologians, of theoretical social reform, and of pose above all, perhaps sponsored a basic attitude concerning which a generalization, however unsafe, may be attempted. The attitude was: the accepted props of civilization have all caved in; there is nothing to substitute for them; but we can be nice about it. Fundamentally the idea of social revolution was either something that would make the poor person pleasant, or something that would make unpleasant rich persons poor. It is amazing in retrospect to find that a young writer like Chesterton could be at once so hostile to the major conclusions of his time and so completely aware of them. Most people do not look at what they dislike. It was characteristic of Chesterton that the more he disliked anything the more carefully he scrutinized it.

And so, for example, he used the epigrammatic essay developed by Oscar Wilde to satirize brilliantly everything for which Wilde stood. "The Defendant" is the most spontaneous and it is nearly the most satisfying volume of short pieces Chesterton ever published. Looking back one finds a really extraordinary forecast of what the author would later on have to say. On the basis of these essays one might well have predicted that young Mr. Chesterton would some day become a Catholic propagandist. Similarly his early verse, utilizing the ballad form revived by Rossetti and the *Yellow Book,* pumped the art-for-art's-sake patterns full of journalistic verve. Worth noting is the fact that his interests lay with Walt Whitman and Francis Thompson rather than with either Kipling or Bridges. The born newspaperman is as evident in Chesterton's fine ballads as it ever was in his weekly columns. One may say—as Mr. T. S. Eliot has said—that his verse is too rhetorical to survive. But one cannot be sure, any more than critics of thirty years ago had a right to predict (as many did) that Dickens would die. Chesterton's ballads and above all his satires are interesting, much more than verbally interesting; and men somehow retain a fondness for being beguiled.

Like most people Chesterton had an almost superstitious respect for certain literary formulae. He was impressed above all by the trick of expressing big things by likening them to little ones.

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An almost childlike pleasure in alliteration—which he never expounded better than in his remarks on Macaulay's "Lays"—was also apt to fascinate him no end. To these he owed some of his best and worst effects, and to them is attributable part of the monotony against which recent critics inveighed. Yet his real magic was so rare and so remote from all mere literary juggling that I may perhaps be pardoned for insisting upon it again. Chesterton had the fateful gift of clairvoyance. His mind was a gallery of self-created pictures in nearly all of which there was meaning. But unlike many others who possess such galleries, his pictures were those of a genuine artist to describe whom the much-abused word "mystic" is unavoidable. A "mystic" is one whose conception of happiness must be defined in terms of the interior life. When Chesterton writes, for example, that "chivalry is the baptism of feudalism," he draws a rapid historical sketch in which there is contained all the things Mr. H. G. Wells could never see. When he fancied, in "Orthodoxy," that the Saviour may have gone into the desert to hide His mirth he said something original—so original, in fact, that no English writer since Blake could have hit upon it.

Naturally a man conerned with being a person rather than a writer could not maintain that level. Chesterton imposed upon himself two disciplines which undoubtedly spoiled much of his prose and some of his verse—the disciplines of hard work and of liberty. A kind of missionary zeal made him so anxious to preach the gospel everywhere that he often forced himself to talk when he was tired. On the other hand, he had an almost fantastic conception of freedom. He saw no reason why he should not write on any subject that appealed to him. The result was, of course, that he did an excellent book about Dickens, a highly impressionistic book about Browning, and a poor book about Chaucer. All are good if you are interested merely in listening to Chesterton talk; but if you happen to be an authority on the subject you will often lift your brows.

I have said that one interest of the 1890's was social reform. England really began to think that the way to produce an ordered and just society was not to effect reforms one at a time, but to evolve a philosophy which then needed only to be put into practise. Bloomsbury was full of such philosophies, but Fabian Socialism gradually became dominant. The Chesterbelloc antidote was presented in the form of Distributism, which Chesterton expounded with astonishing brilliance and zeal. If we look at it impartially, I think we shall all concede that a fundamental difficulty lay in the fact that the views of the two prophets were never reconciled. Belloc was committed to French peasant society as an ideal. But in Chesterton's hands this ideal was only a romantic symbol for the things he liked. He was always an ardent seeker after truth, a pilgrim toward revelation, while Mr. Belloc has been no such thing, but rather a man who, convinced that he possessed the truth, busied himself in its behalf as a propagandist. The Bellocian veneration of form, logic and cold inevitability was flouted every day in the week by Chesterton, to whom these things meant as little as possible. "Napoleon of Notting Hill" and "The Man Who Was Thursday" express the major tenets of the Chestertonian doctrine better than they are stated anywhere else; and French peasant society is the last thing in the world with which they can be combined. The Distributist of Chesterton is someone who, in our better moments, we should all like to be and who we never are; and the Distributist of Mr. Belloc is someone we should not like to be but who, of sheer necessity, we may have to become.

It is therefore understandable that some found it difficult not to believe that the Distributists were at heart believers in a kind of Fascist dictatorship. And could anything really be more grotesque than the notion that G. K. C., patron of winding roads and pubs for everybody, was secretly the patron of a governmental "big stick"? The impression rested on the Bellocian addiction to the doctrine of inevitability. This has frequently a rare, refreshing, Miltonic ring. But it had of necessity no chance to echo in the Chestertonian town.

Yet of course both men shared a common faith. And all of us may well pause to salute the apologetic which, from "Orthodoxy" to "The Catholic Church and Conversion," so vigorously and brilliantly defended the religion of Christendom. The strength of this writing is not inexorable logic, but a thirst after righteousness and beauty. Few have made it as clear as Chesterton did that Catholicism is a way of life quite as much as it is a body of doctrine and a code of law. It is no doubt significant that the best missionary service Chesterton ever rendered the Church was writing the Father Brown stories. These presented a novelty in English letters, a priest everybody can and must like; and it requires very little knowledge of history to realize the import of that novelty. I found myself wishing years ago that Mr. Chesterton were writing more plays like "Magic" and fewer essays refuting a bad old lady's notions of the Pope. I am still wishing, but it is too late. The trouble was that the English-speaking Catholic public could use the essays but didn't know what to do with the plays. One must perforce be content with the result.

I have said only a little of what really ought to be said. There are thousands in the United States for whom this man's death is a personal affliction. His burly figure, his intellectual brilliance, his wit, were so widely relished amongst us that it is safe to say England sent no comparable ambassador during our generation. We have seen him plain, and the impression will abide.

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COOPERATIVE CREDIT

By EDGAR SCHMIEDELER

THE IMPETUS that has been given to co-operation in this country over the past few years has not been limited to consumers and producers cooperatives but has also extended to the field of cooperative credit. Particularly has there been a fairly striking growth in the form of cooperative credit known as the credit union.

A credit union is a corporation organized under a state or federal charter and subject to the usual banking regulations. It is in reality a species of *miniature bank; it receives deposits, makes loans,* and is empowered to invest its surplus in approved securities. The credit union is a cooperative bank because it is owned and managed by its members, each member having but one vote in the election of officers. It accepts the savings of its members in weekly, semi-monthly and monthly instalments.

Membership is restricted to a group of people having some pre-existing tie or bond. Until quite recently, credit unions were usually organized on a parish basis, that is, the membership was restricted to the parishioners of a particular parochial group. The present tendency, at any rate in this country, is to organize credit unions on the basis of associational groups, other than religious, and even more so on the basis of occupational groups. Some are also formed on the basis of small community or neighborhood groups.

To become a member of a credit union, one must be identified with the group in which the cooperative association is organized and must agree to save at least one share of $5, paying for it with cash at the rate of $.25 a week. If a person can save $.50 a week, he subscribes to two shares; if $1 a week, to four shares, etc. This, at any rate, is the usual procedure. Hence, it is apparent that this type of cooperative association deals in relatively small amounts of money and that the members themselves furnish the money by investing their savings in shares.

One of the outstanding purposes of the credit union is to provide credit on reasonable terms for its members, thus enabling them to remain free from the clutches of the loan sharks. Loans are made only to members. The interest charged on the loans is fixed by the board of directors, a group that is elected annually by and from the membership. There is in every credit union a special credit committee whose duty it is to find out whether proposed loans are good ones, whether they are safe and for good purposes. Character is always the first consideration and the foundation on which loans are made. Ordinarily, loans exceeding $50 cannot be made without co-makers who have adequate security. Other useful purposes of the credit union are the promotion of thrift and saving among its members and education of its members in the management of money.

The credit union has operated with an unusual degree of success for more than three-quarters of a century in a number of European countries. In this country, however, it is still relatively new. Credit unions were started on the North American continent by Alphonse Desjardins. They were *first established among the French Canadians in* the Province of Quebec and were a combination of the German or Raiffeisen and the Italian or Luzzatti type. From Canada the *Caisse Populaire* crossed over into the United States to New England. In the Catholic parish of Saint Marie in Manchester, New Hampshire, the first unit was founded in 1909 by Desjardins with the cooperation of Monsignor Pierre Hevey, pastor of the parish. There was no credit union law, hence its organization was provided for by a special act of the legislature of the state. In 1931, it was the second largest credit union in the United States, with assets of over $1,500,000, and a membership totaling nearly 4,000. It is no longer a parish institution. The largest credit union in 1931 was that of Central Falls, Rhode Island.

In 1910, the credit union movement was introduced into the French Canadian parishes of Massachusetts and eight parish credit unions have been organized. A law permitting the establishment of cooperative credit institutions had been enacted in 1909. In 1921, Edward A. Filene founded the Credit Union National Extension Bureau, which he personally financed, and it soon became the main center of operation for the credit union movement. Special interest in the parish phase of credit union work developed about 1926 when the Bureau joined hands with the Catholic Rural Life Conference.

The Central Bureau of the Central Verein of America, with headquarters at St. Louis, Missouri, has contributed not a little to the success of the parish credit union movement. It had espoused the cause of parish credit union, especially in rural districts, even before other agencies had conceived the idea. Particularly has the state of Missouri, under the influence of the Central Bureau, gone forward in the development of parish credit unions. In its work, the Bureau has cooperated wholeheartedly with the Credit Union National Extension Bureau and with the Catholic Rural Life Conference.

In 1929, a significant step was taken in the

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furtherance of Catholic activity in the credit union field when there was formed in the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, a Parish Credit Union National Committee to coordinate and give further impetus to Catholic efforts.

In 1934, the Credit Union National Extension Bureau of Mr. Filene was disbanded and a larger organization substituted for it. This new organization is known as the Credit Union National Association and has its headquarters at Raiffeisen House, Madison, Wisconsin. Mr. Filene is its president and Mr. Roy F. Bergengren its managing director. A Catholic priest, Reverend William M. McGuire, of Genoa, Illinois, is a member of its Board of Directors.

The most recent development in credit unions in the United States was the formation late in 1934 of a Credit Union Section in the Farm Credit Administration of the federal government. This government agency has now nineteen field investigators who are prepared to give prompt assistance to groups anywhere in the United States desiring to form credit unions. A federal credit union law (the Sheppard Act) was passed in 1934, making possible the establishment of units in all parts of the United States, even where there may be no state law. Among the first units established through the instrumentality of the federal agency were the following two parish credit unions in Connecticut: St. Mary's parish at Meriden, and St. Boniface's parish at New Haven.

Thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia now have credit union laws. Besides these there is the federal law, covering the whole country and the insular possessions and territories.

The following opinion regarding the establishment of credit unions under state or federal law was expressed in *Central Blatt and Social Justice*, January, 1933:

> A reasonable statement regarding the Federal C. U. and the associations chartered under state laws is contained in Vol. 2, No. 1, "Rural Bureau Notes," published by the Rural Life Bureau, Department of Social Action, N. C. W. C. "It would seem the best policy," the "Notes" declare, "to continue the credit union movement primarily as a state development wherever a good state law exists. In other words, the federal law should not be looked upon as a substitute for these state laws. This is not said, however, to discredit the federal law or to intimate that it is superfluous. Indeed, it can play an important rôle in the credit union movement in its present state of development. . . ."
>
> The C. U. should ever remain as nearly autonomous as it is possible to keep it. State laws, of course, must be observed to prevent abuses; they should be improved where needed. A measure of federal regulation may in time be required also. There is, however a contradiction in principle between the spontaneity of effect for which the C. U. provides a channel and the truly democratic operation it permits and demands, on the one hand, and federal control on the other.

The growth of credit unions through the instrumentality of the Credit Union Section of the Farm Credit Administration is now quite rapid. Ninety-two new units were chartered during the month of February, bringing the total organized under its auspices up to 1,096. That represents the record of the Credit Union Section in less than a year and a half of service. Federal credit unions are now operating in every state except Alabama, New Hampshire and Wisconsin.

Credit unions are also showing a satisfactory growth after they are established. Referring to the matter of growth or expansion of federal units, the editor of *Cooperative Saving* has this to say regarding the 732 units organized before January 1, 1936:

> Examination of the December financial reports clearly indicates that the vast majority of federal credit unions continue to grow slowly but steadily. They are enrolling new members gradually who in turn are saving larger amounts in shares. . . . Over 82 percent of their savings in shares was outstanding in useful loans to their members at the end of last year.

State units as well as federal units are growing in number and in size. An indication of this growth is shown by a statement of the Minnesota Banking Division of state credit unions at the close of 1934. The number of credit unions under state supervision stood at 195 at the end of last year as against 171 reporting in 1934, and the membership numbered 34,408 as compared to 30,281 at the end of the previous year. Total savings last December 31 were $2,261,000, a gain of 37 percent over the year before. Total loans during 1935 amounted to $3,070,000, or over 40 percent above that of 1934.

The December, 1935, reports showed $2,080,000 saved by 113,600 members of 732 federal credit unions, none of which were more than fifteen months old. Loans made since their organization totaled $3,228,215.95. Loans outstanding at the end of 1935 amounted to $1,714,426.89.

Perhaps the most accurate estimate that can be made at the present time would place the total number of credit unions in this country at about 4,000 and the total membership at about 800,000. More striking than these figures is the momentum that the movement has gained the past few years. There is no apparent reason to doubt that this momentum will considerably increase in the near future. And this gives much point to the words of the late Sir Horace Plunkett:

> The credit union idea is a discovery as important for the financial order of the world as steam was for the industrial order.

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A DIONNE MEETS PATIENCE

By PHILIP BURNHAM

THE QUINTUPLETS, who already have the British Empire for legal parent, seem in some danger of getting Patience as their official disciplinarian. Dr. Dafoe is not inclined to consider the situation alarming, and although "some of these modern methods are a revelation" to the Doctor—"an old-fashioned man [as he says], reared in the old-fashioned way"—he is willing to be convinced that the innovations are for the greater good and psychological serenity of mankind. If this is so, one need not look for a crisis, perhaps, but it's impossible not to feel uneasy at the tendency, a cloud at least as big as your hand. Psychological serenity can be overemphasized.

The threat became apparent one day when they put the quintuplets to bed and Emilie, instead of going to sleep like a good, or well-conditioned, little girl, slipped out and began crawling around the floor. Her physician told on her in the newspapers. "The nurse stepped quickly into the nursery, picked up Emilie without reproach or reproof and tucked her back into bed." But Emilie, approaching her second birthday, was in an experimental mood, so she wriggled out again and resumed her crawling around. The nurse came again: "Without saying a word, quietly but firmly, she tucked Emilie back where she belonged." Maintaining her attitude, Emilie slipped on the floor once more. At this stage Dr. Dafoe breaks the narrative to estimate what would have been the next scene if the protagonists had been his father and himself, and the time fifty years previous. It "would have consisted of a flow of very firm and emphatic language from my father, accompanied by perhaps a few gestures with the back of a hairbrush." The remarkable nurse of this most remarkable baby, however, "tucked Emilie into her bed just seventy-one times, and all this without raising her voice or hinting at punishment or even annoyance. Emilie went to sleep then." The baby was more lenient the next night; the nurse only had to put her back sixty-five times. The third night it was fifty times.

It is really very hard to order the misgivings such an anecdote about a Dionne raises in the mind of an ordinary newspaper reader. Dr. Dafoe's idea is that "the nurse's plan, though it took the patience of a Job, seems to me to be right." This sounds like a pretty blanket endorsement, but some other things the doctor writes make it seem he is not thoroughly and deeply satisfied with it. All he has to say about the effect on the infant is this: "Emilie got the idea. Within a few nights she knew it wasn't any use. . . . Emilie has learned all that was necessary to teach her—that when you are put to bed you might as well stay there." I must say that this is all definitely too bleak for me. "When you are put to bed you might as well stay there!" This might be comprehensible on rainy mornings for a dissipated man when the alarm goes off, but for a child at bed-time, the flower of the day, it is simply depressing. It is, as a matter of fact, a counsel of wormish servility and cringing before man-made imitations of natural law and a lesson in psychological apathy.

Dr. Dafoe makes a rather sharp distinction: "Now you could strike a child the second time it got out of bed, and perhaps terrorize it into staying there. That would relieve the wear and tear on the parents, but would it teach the child anything except that the parent is a wilful giant who punishes you suddenly and angrily when you are doing something quite natural, such as getting out of bed?" At first glance this might seem to make a pretty horrid picture after the sweet reasonableness of Nurse Leroux or Nurse Noel (whichever it was), but when all the implications are brought in, it turns out to be a gentle and human idyl in contrast to that subtly sinister "she knew it wasn't any use."

Dr. Dafoe minimizes the situation when he writes as if the only thing Emilie learned was that "when you are put to bed you might as well stay there." We are perfectly willing to admit she learned this lesson adequately, but this isn't the kind of lesson you can very well learn all by itself. It was impressed upon her that there was a law against crawling around after lights, and that it was a very peculiar law enforced with queer sanctions. It just was. Her amiable nurse showed no living connection with the legislation whatsoever. You simply got up and nurse simply put you back. It was like your foot jerking when Dr. Dafoe knocked your knee with his hammer. Nurse took it as something quite inevitable and showed no more impatience with it than with cloudy weather. These great giants apparently accepted this oppressive law as something quite beyond their field of approval or disapproval, liking or disliking, and nowhere near their field of free action. Emilie tried, until she was so tired she fell asleep, to get from her nurse some explanatory word or cry or gesture, some human manipulation of this inexorable sequence of events. But the nurse obviously accepted her own part as set by a greater design; she fulfilled her function quietly and firmly, unemotionally, inevitably. Nurse was fitted into the machinery without giving any objection or displaying any independent fancifulness. Evidently for her, too, "it wasn't any use." At any rate, one had better stay in bed passively, because if you don't, forces originating outside the human ken put you back in.

This stark adventure is actually praised in contrast to the rich and vital experience of a spanked child. Suppose when Emilie first objected to her bed-time the nurse came in and asked in a most commanding voice: "What in the world are you doing out there? Don't you know that the idea when you go to bed is to go to sleep? Get right back and don't let me hear another peep out of you."

The chances are tolerable that Emilie would have figured that Nurse certainly objects to getting out of bed and it might be dangerous to try it again. But if she did, and Nurse boiled into the room and shook her finger at her and fairly yelled: "Now this is the last time! You've gone far enough! Don't you suppose I have a thing to do except put you to bed? Once more and I'll give you something to remember. I'm going to look in here in exactly five minutes and if you're not sound asleep you won't get your favorite breakfast food for six weeks! Now! [With a good stiff tuck] Go to sleep!"

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If Emilie were foolish enough to get out a third time, let us pass over the unfortunate spanking. It would only intensify the same impression. Emilie would think anyway: "Well, my word, she certainly got excited about that. I don't feel like going to sleep. When I grow up children won't ever have to go to sleep. Nurses seem to me very unreasonable. All I was doing was crawling around in a perfectly orderly fashion. Humph, I'd like to know when she goes to bed. When I get big I'll make her go to bed at six-thirty without any supper. She certainly almost gave it to me! [Or—She certainly did give it to me!] Who wants to stay in bed? The sky's still light outside and I'm not tired. Hmn, we did have fun exploring for worms in the big garden this afternoon. I wonder if she'll take us there tomorrow? Anyway! Ho, hum."

There would be nothing very conclusive about such a reverie. It would even be possible for Emilie to get out of bed a month later (almost unthinkable after the first brand of disciplining), and get herself punished all over again. But how much nearer reality the Dionne would be. There would be no unintelligible cosmic force decreeing babies must stay in bed. The mystery would be put where it belongs, to the strange whims of grown folk, to be understood and controlled later—perhaps. Nurse was a human being, enforcing, and maybe inventing, a convenient law to regulate her own life and the life of those with whom she was charged. Nurse was recognized as a person of queer moods, not all of them altogether agreeable, but known to be charming on excursions into the garden. And how much more charming she might be after a quiet battle of personality than after a grim war of attrition. People are peculiar to get along with. Getting along at all is a rather strange process. The child would recognize herself as a moral agent capable of her own decisions and would anticipate a time when she would be more responsible. At least one had better not get up, or one runs the risk of annoying Nurse and getting soundly thrashed.

Very obviously, I have no idea what two-year-old infants get into their heads in the process of being disciplined, and I have no very honest opinion of what treatment makes children grow up to imitate gangsters and what treatment influences them to be good and attractive, but, nevertheless, a negative and irresponsible attitude toward harassing human checks can be deplored. It is perfectly true that a lot of conventional things people do they might as well do—for practically no other reason. The supply of nervous energy in the world isn't inexhaustible and it's easy to upset things vainly and vexatiously. But few things are more revolting than smugly attributing to uncomfortable symptoms of a present human order the incontrovertible absoluteness of physical laws. Especially by one who is just getting started. Dr. Dafoe should watch carefully that his prizes don't become, like so many of us, stick-in-the-muds, listlessly resigning themselves to current rules that are no more than abstracted rackets. So far, they and their nurses have been remarkably fine educators, but in that line we hardly need a further education.

Communications

THE EMPLOYER

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor: In their letters in THE COMMONWEAL of May 15 Father McGowan and Mr. DeBrul are in agreement on the facts but differ in their interpretations. The main fact seems to be that the employers do not in considerable numbers attend the meetings of the Catholic Conferences on Industrial Problems. Father McGowan says, "We intend to continue to hew to the whole program of Catholic social teaching, exaggerating no part of it and suppressing no part of it." Mr. DeBrul refers to employers as "normal human beings in refusing to attend sessions where most of the speakers were trying to kick them into sweetness and light."

Pope Pius XI, in "Quadragesimo Anno," foresaw the difficulty. In referring to the formation of associations he says, "Associations of employers and captains of industry, which Our Predecessor so earnestly pleaded for, did not meet with the same success; they are, we regret to say, still few in number. The reason for this must not be entirely attributed to want of good-will, but to other and far more serious obstacles, whose nature and gravity we know and appreciate to the full." And he makes reference to a letter of the Sacred Congregation of the Council to the Bishop of Lille, June 5, 1929.

I wonder if the purpose of the Catholic Conferences on Industrial Problems is well understood by the public. They might be (1) meetings of employees to discuss their rights and duties, or (2) meetings of employers to discuss their rights and duties, or (3) meetings at which persons from employees' organizations and persons from employers' organizations came together to discuss mutual rights and duties, or (4) meetings at which the bishops and clergy taught the principles of the encyclicals, or they might be organized for several of these and other good purposes. In my opinion only good would come from a frequent reiteration of the definite purpose or purposes for which the conferences are held.

QUAD. ANNO.

"THE SHROPSHIRE LAD"

Webster Groves, Mo.

TO the Editor: Congratulations on your splendid editorial on A. E. Housman in THE COMMONWEAL for May 15, which I have sent to his brother who has just written me a letter; two passages of which will interest all Housman enthusiasts:

"My brother had finished his work, and wished not to live longer. His last two years have been full of increasing weakness and pain; but he stuck to his job; and three weeks before his death gave his last two lectures, sitting down, being too weak to stand. . . .

"You will be glad to hear that there are at least thirty poems left over which I shall be able to publish as his real 'Last Poems.'"

CYRIL CLEMENS.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—One of the outstanding summer musical centers in the United States is being built up by Mr. Claude Gonvierre at the Catholic Summer School of America in its buildings in a pine grove on the shore of Lake Champlain. Among the noted musical artists giving courses are Norman Joliffe and Bernice Frost. * * * United States Catholic students at the University of Paris passed all their examinations successfully and 70 percent of them received honors. Miss Dorothy Allen of Sandusky, Ohio, and the College of St. Teresa, Winona, Minnesota, was accorded the mention *Très Bien;* Miss Josephine Lee of Danbury, Connecticut, and Albertus Magnus College, and Miss Frances Barnett of Chicago and Trinity College, Washington, were accorded the mention *Bien,* which is the equivalent of a *Magna Cum Laude;* and Miss Maurie Callahan of Abingdon, Massachusetts, and New Rochelle College, New York, was accorded the mention *Assez Bien,* equivalent of *Cum Laude.* * * * Next week is rich in feast days of important saints: Saint Anne, Mother of the Blessed Virgin; Saint Pantaleon, who gave up his faith for false maxims of the world for awhile, only to return, give all his goods to the poor and, finally, his life for his faith; Saints Nazarius and Celsus, Roman army officers who refused to apostate and were beheaded; Saint Martha, Sister of St. Mary Magdalen, and heroine of an interesting tradition; Saint Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who before his conversion was a lawyer in Rome and later an officer of the Imperial Army (he visited England and overcame the Pelagian heresy there and died in 448 while interceding with Imperial Rome for the people of Brittany); and Saint Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus. * * * The Duke of Berwick and Alba has opened a new Campion Hall, at Oxford, for the Jesuits. * * * The Most Reverend Thomas J. Toolen, Bishop of Mobile, has announced that more than 800 persons have been brought back to the sacraments in the Diocese of Mobile, as the result of a year's special effort for fallen-away Catholics. * * * The new King of Egypt, Farouk I, has assigned a Catholic priest, Canon Drioton, to be Director of the Service of Antiquities, the world's highest post of Egyptology.

The Nation.—The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System increased the reserve requirements of member banks up to 50 percent as a measure to prevent possible credit inflation. This cuts the funds held by member banks on deposit with Federal Reserve Banks in excess of legal requirements, which can be used as a basis for loans. The system's low interest policy for all kinds of credit will at the same time be maintained. There is still plenty of money seeking investment. * * * The *Automobile Trade Journal,* after investigating 500 accidents in an eastern state, came to the sinister conclusion that the accident rate by automobile yearly models increases as the cars are newer. Accidents are fewer than proportional to the cars in operation for models older than 1931. Both 1934 and 1935 cars suffer more than 150 percent of the "expected" number of accidents. * * * Prohibition sentiment is increasing according to a report of the United States Brewers' Association. In 1935, local option elections resulted in increasing the number of dry towns by 149 percent, and dry counties by 94 percent. * * * The National Youth Administration distributed the first $10,000,000 of its 1936-1937 appropriation of $71,250,000. This money will largely be spent on extension and vocational education. State and local governments will manage most of the schooling. * * * The United States and Russia extended for a year the trade pact negotiated last July. During the eleven months ending May 31, 1936, we exported to the U. S. S. R. $33,900,000 worth of goods, and imported $18,330,018 worth. During the year ending June 30, 1935, the figures were $16,840,788 and $14,031,420. * * * The executive council of the American Federation of Labor failed to bring the controversy between the craft forces and industrial forces to the predicted climax when it decided on July 15 to put the show-down off to August 3, when a formal trial of the twelve C. I. O. unions will be held in Washington. Representatives of the federal government were frankly working for some sort of a compromise and the administration attempted to avoid backing either group.

The Wide World.—After rumors had circulated to the effect that something was due to happen in Austria, the signing of an Austro-German accord was announced on July 11. Though remaining a party to the Rome pact signed in 1934, Austria pledges herself to conduct befitting a "Germanic" revisionist power. Germany, on the other hand, concedes Vienna's right to impose a ban upon Austrian Nazis, and suspends in part the famous "thousand mark barricade" which ever since 1933 had kept German tourists out of Tyrol resorts. According to the New York *Times* correspondent, the accord has two secret annexes, one pledging Austria to equip 300,000 men to maintain its independence, the other vaguely asserting that Hapsburg restoration is not being considered at the moment. Explanations in number were offered, the London version being that Germany acted in order to prevent the signing of a tripartite agreement between Italy, France and Russia. The French view is pessimistic. * * * A conference at Montreux, Switzerland, called to draw up a convention regulating traffic in the Dardanelles, came to a sensational halt on July 9 when Nicolas Titulescu, Rumania's foreign minister, angrily denounced the duplicity of British policy, walked out of the room, and took a train to Bucharest. Mr. Titulescu, an active supporter of the League and its recent Ethiopian policy, has encountered opposition at home. * * * Great Britain withdrew a considerable part of the fleet assembled in the Mediterranean for the emergency, but stated that the number of ships to be main-

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tained there would be larger than it was prior to the disagreement with Italy. Sir Samuel Hoare, First Lord of the Admiralty, asserted that a first-rate navy, fully the equal of that maintained by the United States, was a matter of life and death for Britain. He said that the fleet would be completely modernized and supplemented by an adequate air force. * * * Queries as to the meaning of recent Zeppelin flights over England were dispatched to the German government. Upon several occasions, the dirigible Hindenburg has flown over secret military defenses. * * * Apparently French Rightists had agreed to stage no public demonstrations on Bastille Day. But there was serious fighting between extremists factions at Nice, where 10,000 persons engaged in a brawl following a Communist attempt to break up a Fascist meeting. * * * An impressive demonstration for peace was staged by many thousands of former soldiers who went to Verdun and then marched silently to the Douaumont Ossuary. There each took an oath to labor for peace. The Blum government shared in the expenses occasioned. * * * Guerilla warfare of some importance is being waged in various parts of Ethiopia. Native warriors tore up railway track not far from Addis Ababa, but failed to seize a supply train they evidently hoped to capture.

* * * *

The Townsendites.—Following the Socialists and Republicans, 9,000 voting delegates gathered in Cleveland for the second annual convention of the Old Age Revolving Pensions, Ltd. Townsend Clubs were permitted one voting delegate for every fifty members. There were also voting "board" delegates, elected at large by all the clubs in a congressional district. By paying a $1 fee, "legion" delegates could have the privilege of the floor but no vote. Gathered also were about twenty-five Citizens Maximi, distinguished sympathizers of the movement selected by state memberships, and expected to give advice to the board of directors. The Reverend Gerald K. Smith, who tries to hold Huey P. Long's following, was a very important man at the convention. He and Dr. Townsend predicted before the official opening that neither would officially support the Union party. Townsendites and Share the Wealthers will concentrate on congressmen and senators this year, and perhaps in 1940 will have a party of their own supporting the Townsend Recovery Plan. Representative William Lemke, however, was scheduled to address the convention. Dr. Townsend said that he might personally and unofficially vote for Lemke, because he could not vote for the Republican or Democrat. Governor Landon he considers "diametrically opposed" to everything he stands for, and he is against Roosevelt because "he has taken all our finest phrases and used them to win votes without giving us anything we want." A big problem before the convention was the democratizing of the Townsend movement. At present the leader has practically complete control of the whole thing, but there is powerful sentiment to change this state of affairs. The Citizens Maximi were expected to aid in compromise measures designed to bring democracy. Dr. Townsend's ideal is the old New England town meeting, where each citizen was informed on every proposal. He believes the national Congress would be better as a unicameral chamber with fewer members than the House of Representatives now has.

The German Catholic Situation.—Possibly the gravest single problem which confronts the Church in Germany is giving aid and sympathy to non-Aryan faithful whom the laws have deprived of every opportunity to earn a livelihood or even to receive state unemployment assistance. The ban is now being applied not merely to those who have a Jewish parent or grandparent, but also in many instances to those who have an "alien" great-grandfather. Not a few of Germany's most distinguished and most loyal Catholics are affected by this disastrous ruling. To date little has been done in other countries to render assistance, and indeed the gravest misconceptions of the situation still prevail. Several bishops have spoken in public concerning the "morality trials." Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop Groeber and Bishop Von Galen have denounced the manner in which the tribunals were acting, and the exploitation of the evidence in the official press. The Nazis have succeeded in unearthing here and there a figure against which a case of moral turpitude could be made with a degree of success. Unfortunately the details cannot be set forth. But it may be stated that one priest was sentenced to prison for having admittedly once kissed a little school-girl. Nazi journals, which one must wish more persons would read, are filled in particular with accusations against the bishops for having failed to "clean house." An especially bitter attack has been levied against the Bishop of Trier, though he is noted for having counseled Saar Basin Catholics to vote for reunion with the Fatherland. In some instances, the conclusion is adduced that the authorities are powerless to deal with the situation, because it is so general that the attempt would be hopeless. Other departments of ecclesiastical activity have been subjected to more and more governmental interference. Thus in parts of Bavaria families were forbidden this year to use any but Nazi flags in decorating their homes for the Corpus Christi processions.

Non-Catholic Religious Activities.—Dr. Stephen S. Wise was elected president of the Zionist Organization of America at its thirty-ninth annual convention in Providence, Rhode Island. Mr. Morris Rothenberg, outgoing president, was elected chairman of the legislative committee, and Mr. Louis Lipsky, credited with inducing Dr. Wise to run for president, will be a member of the executive committee. * * * The Reverend F. W. Abel, pastor of the Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church at Glendale, New York, announced a solution to what he termed "a national religious problem"—he will conduct services Thursday evenings so that his parishioners can play golf and go picnicking on Sundays, during July and August, and possibly September. "Those who attend Thursday evening services won't have to come Sunday morning," he decreed; but concluded, "There is no law against attending both services each week." * * * Dr. Worth M. Tippy, executive secretary of the Department

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of the Church and Social Service of the Federal Council of Churches, in the United States Chamber of Commerce publication, the *Nation's Business,* appeals to business men to be on their guard against the reckless charges of the "Red Network Propagandists" whom he compares to Ku Klux Klansmen, or the Know-nothing men of Lincoln's day, as a selfish group seeking to cash in on fears and prejudices. * * * Religious tolerance is gaining in America, according to Dr. James M. Yard, speaking before the 45th annual convention of the Baptist Young People's Union. He attributed this to the fact that intolerance can no longer work without being exposed to the common sense and fair play of the people. * * * The Friends General Conference, of the Quaker Church, met at Cape May and heard addresses on international amity and the church's relation to science.

A Beloved Actor.—Time was when Tom Meighan was the incarnation of sturdy and daring young manhood for virtually everybody in the Americas. There have been few more handsome lads than this son of a Pittsburgh steel magnate, who quietly but firmly refused to be anything but an actor. It took him fifteen years to rise to the top of his profession, but once arrived he was undisputedly king of them all. After a long whirl at the legitimate stage, he turned to the movies in 1916. They had definitively emerged from nickelodeon days by that time, but the technique still placed the burden of romantic parts on the actor. Meighan was the "good-looking hero" who set off such glamorous heroines as Norma Talmadge, Pauline Frederick and Blanche Sweet to advantage. Indeed, his drawing power may in good measure have been responsible for the films' later dedication to love stories. Among the best pictures he made were "Male and Female," that delectable screen version of a Barrie play, which one might almost desire to see again as ardently as one longs for another look at Maude Adams's "Peter Pan"; and "The Miracle Man," a drama with glaring faults but also great theatrical virtues. His final picture was "Peck's Bad Boy." By the time that talkies had come in, thespian methods had changed, and Meighan began to seem a bit out of date. He was warmly loved and greatly respected as a man. His family life was an oasis in the moral desert of Hollywood during the glitter days. In New York he was an urbane and distinguished but always a delightful man.

* * * *

The Drought.—Rains and cooler weather undoubtedly came to the drought area—officially, 385 counties in twelve states as compared with 495 counties on the same date during the 1934 drought—but the grain markets reflected the uncertainty concerning the actual condition of crops and cattle. Resettlement Administration Administrator Tugwell and Acting WPA Administrator Williams flew to the new drought relief headquarters in Bismarck, North Dakota, to direct the extensive government relief. By December 1, they expect 111,000 families to be on the drought dole. Although a few weeks ago the President said there would be no large-scale shifting of population, the tendency seemed to be in that direction. Bonus checks have already been extensively used by many in the west of the Dakotas to leave their farms. Everyone agrees that the land in that region has been severely overgrazed or overcropped and that much of it should be brought back to grassland. The RA estimates that if the land were used properly in the western two-thirds of the Dakotas, 30 percent of the population would have to move out. They would move, presumably, to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Already in Montana, the RA has well started purchasing and preparing 1,000,000 acres in an experimental project, leaving uplands free for grazing, and establishing irrigation below for emergency forage crops. The government will have to spend anywhere between $15,000,000 and $30,000,000 before the next growing season to feed cattle, the sum depending on rains from now to the end of this season. By July 15, the excessive heat throughout the nation had caused 3,848 deaths. The WPA gave $3,000,000 for immediate use in twenty-nine states where the relief problem has jumped with dry weather. Administrator Hopkins said, however, that this was for permanent works in the long-time plan to conserve the soil. While assigning it, he gave a rather remarkable statement on the policy of the WPA: "The Works Progress Administration has gone out of the emergency relief business." The type of WPA work contemplated is already under way in Minnesota, where a lake twenty miles by two miles and about sixty-four various sized dams are being built to preserve big and little waters.

Civil Service Problem.—The human equation of transferring the numbers of persons employed with emergency quickness to combat the worst impacts of human destitution upon the unemployed who because of scant resources, illness or underprivileged conditions faced starvation, is presented by the struggle being waged between the American Federation of Government Employees and some members of the New York Municipal Civil Service Commission. Under the Hendel Law, drafted by the federation, passed by the New York State Legislature and signed by Governor Lehman, it became possible for the Emergency Relief Bureaus' executives to place their staffs, numbering some 11,000 workers, in the classified civil service. The bone of contention is whether the transfer shall be made after a competitive (free-for-all) examination, which is the rule rather than the exception in the making of civil service appointments, or whether it shall be made after non-competitive examinations limited to the people who are at present employed in home relief administration. The federation holds that an open competitive examination is "always full of questions designed to test general, academic knowledge, frequently unrelated to the duties of the job," and that the whole matter would be thrown open to political pressure and personal favors. A saving to the taxpayers and an assurance that there will be a minimum of disturbance to the poor on very scant and uncertain rations of relief, is said by the federation to be assured if the personnel tried and trained by months and years of practical experience is maintained almost intact.

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The Play and Screen

The Negro "Macbeth"

THE NEGRO performance of "Macbeth" under the auspices of the Federal Theatre has now been brought from Harlem to Broadway and is shortly to make a tour of the country. It is a progression well deserved, despite the fact that most of the actors show small comprehension of the Shakespearean spirit and even less of the reading of blank verse. Except that these actors have musical voices, there is little to commend their performances vocally. They speak gently, even plaintively, without power or passion, and a Macbeth without these two qualities is surely no Macbeth. Moreover, they slur the magnificent lines. Shakespeare's figures of speech, his superb imagery, his verbal music mean little to the actors. And the same is true of the action of their individual performances. Yet this very "Macbeth" has proved one of the most heartening things the American stage has seen. The reason is simple—the presence of a director of the first order, a director of intelligence and, what is rarest of all, of imagination. Mr. Orson Welles is only twenty-one years old, and yet already in originality of conception, in daring of execution and sureness of touch, his direction is that of a master. Mr. Welles's "Macbeth" has shown what can still be done with Shakespeare, as it can be done with any other of the classics of the past, once the dead hand of use and want, called mistakenly "tradition," is lifted from them. For though there are stretches of boredom when the individual actors have the center of the stage, whenever the director has his chance, in bits of business, in massed action, in lighting, in original combinations, the Federal Theatre "Macbeth" leaps into life spontaneous and glowing.

Purists will of course object. They will declare that Mr. Welles has cut the play out of all semblance, that he has turned the witches into voodoo doctors and the barren heath to the jungle, that he has dressed the characters like figures from a Negro carnival. All of this is true—and to Mr. Welles's credit. Knowing the limitations of his actors he wisely determined to lay his stress upon the melodrama, to cut out all that was unessential to the story, to throw verisimilitude to the winds. Negro actors cannot be made to appear as Scots, and after all Shakespeare's "Macbeth" is no more Scotch in essence than is "Hamlet" Danish. So what Mr. Welles has given us is Shakespeare's story and his language interpreted as a sort of combined melodrama and phantasamagoria. And given in this way the old play, so often of recent years condemned to academic dullness, becomes vibrant and electric. The voodoo scenes with Hecate and the three Weird Sisters are magnificent in their power and their horror, while the quick change from the murders to the wild waltz of the banquet scene is one of the most thrilling moments ever witnessed in the American theatre.

What this "Macbeth" has shown is, that imaginatively given Shakespeare can be brought back to popular acclaim, can mean something vital to the people of today. The theatre of mere realism has been too long with us, and the romanticism of the movies and its glamor, however false, has been the people's answer to our theatre's pedestrianism. The people want more than drawing-room plays, than gangster dramas, than cynical or salacious comedies. They want romance, and poetry, and imagination, and will take the phony when they are not given the true. This is why Mr. Welles's advent is so heartening. It is understood that he is to give at the Adelphi Theatre a number of old plays, this time with white actors. His "Macbeth" is an omen of what we may look forward to. Poetry and imaginative daring have too long been Cinderellas in our theatre. Too long have our dramatists and our directors followed the beaten path, which has been trod so often that the flowers along its borders have long since been plucked. Orson Welles has shown the courage to strike out into new paths and yet not to lose his way.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

The Poor Little Rich Girl

THERE are strong indications that her producers are proceeding strictly on the premise that no matter how much Shirley Temple there is in a picture it is still not quite enough. And always the so-called screen's "top tot" sings, dances and acts the same—there is never any deviation, charming as she is.

The production itself is one of those things. Although the story was suggested by the familiar "Poor Little Rich Girl" stories of Eleanor Gates and Ralph Spence, and the title of the earlier work was used, Sam Hellman, Gladys Lehman and Harry Tugend have written an entirely new screen play for the sole convenience of the little starlet. Shirley plays fed up with being the pampered darling daughter of great wealth, so walks from her home and into a series of adventures in the streets, first with the typically poor organ player, next with some vaudevillians who carry her on to a popular commercial radio debut for a soap firm which is in opposition to her rich daddy's. He merges both soap companies and marries the competitor's press agent.

My Man Godfrey

SPLENDID summer entertainment, in the vein of nonsensical comedy that is pitched to a high key in satirical farce. The capable Gregory La Cava produced and directed the play from Eric Hatch's hilarious novel, winding Morrie Ryskind's witty adaptation around a sparkling cast which expertly carries the insane and ridiculous comedy situations to a rollicking conclusion, on the crest of funny and foolish dialog.

The contents of the vehicle not once reach anything even remotely resembling seriousness, as the suave William Powell is taken from the derelict setting of an ash heap and placed as a butler in the home of his sponsor, and very social Carole Lombard, who has a snobbish socialite sister, Gail Patrick, and an addle-minded mother, Alice Brady. There is also a pestiferous singing Russian protégé, played by Mischa Auer. Hilarious events ensue.

JAMES P. CUNNINGHAM.

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Books

Nebraska

Spring Storm, by Alvin Johnson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

EVERYBODY, the saying goes, has a novel in him, and, judging by the publishers' lists, everybody sooner or later gets it out. Though novelists are so common, most novels are offered as evidence that, in another way, their authors are very uncommon persons indeed. Certainly, if a man is to be the hero of a novel, he must be distinguished from the general run of men; that is what makes him worth writing about, even if the purpose is to emphasize how typical he is of the whole of humanity. The regrettable thing is that he is often distinguished only by his identity with his author.

In his sixties, the Director of the New School for Social Research has published his first novel. It is about Nebraska in the eighties, and we meet its hero at fourteen and leave him at eighteen. In the interim he has become acquainted with Western methods of farming and with adultery. The former, I think, supplies the book with more interesting material, though the latter is its excuse for being and serves the function of bringing the book to some sort of conclusion. Julian, the hero, was the son of an "advanced" school-teacher who, coming into an inheritance, bought a farm which he mismanaged through "scientific farming." Julian, distressed by this mismanagement, took over the farm and handled it with remarkable success for his years, until he became entangled with his neighbor's wife.

Julian is not so exquisitely sensitive as he might have been had Mr. Johnson written this novel in his twenties; he can pitch hay and fists with the best of them. He remains, however, an alien amongst the rude Nebraska farmers; and if he hadn't there would, in all truth, have been no novel to write. These farmers are given to excessive use of strong chewing tobacco, coarse language, and infrequent use of soap—at least so far as they are typified in the person of Henry, the neighbor for whose wife Julian conceives his passion. They are, none the less, "respectable," so that the novel follows a tradition in these matters when Julian finds true understanding and companionship amongst the squatters and outcasts of "the Bend." It is there that he meets Dut, the son of a man who died in prison. Dut becomes his best friend and one who distils for him a simple and earthy philosophy. Dut is a specimen of the natural man in his Nebraska habitat, the pure wisdom of the natural state uncorrupted in him by regular work or a position in society.

"Spring Storm" is compounded of almost equal parts of youthful groping, sex and doubtful philosophy. Mr. Johnson has retained his sympathy for the first, does not by present standards in fiction treat the second offensively, and in the third presents what is to be expected of the average novel. With these facts in mind, the average reader will probably reflect that he can buy for the same price novels of twice the length of Mr. Johnson's containing the same ingredients.

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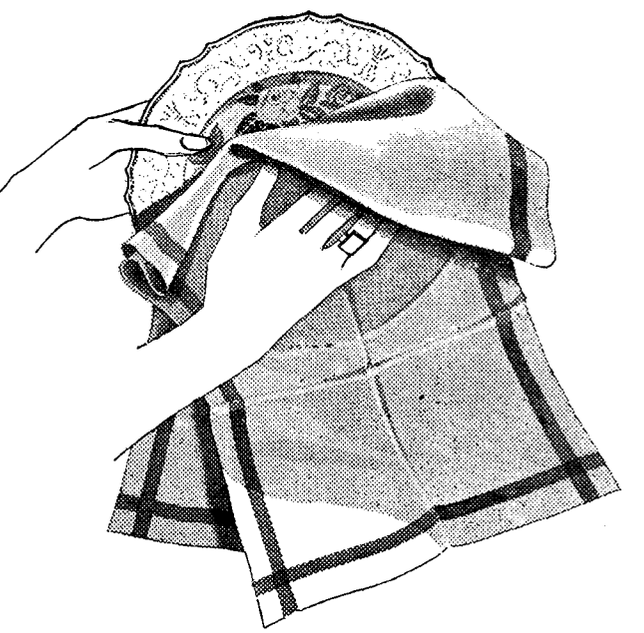

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A Cautious Patriot

John Jay, by Frank Monaghan. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company. $4.00.

IN THIS "new, complete and perhaps definitive portrait of one of the most significant and interesting figures of the eighteenth century," there are few blemishes discernible in Jay, whose greatness and goodness are extolled at the expense of worthies like Clinton, the Adamses, the Virginians, the wicked men of the Conway Cabal, which he helped expose, Burr, Franklin, and Deane. At times these less worthy men are harshly estimated and dogmatically labeled. The author grows to like Jay despite his austere and restrained personality, his rigid conduct, and his Federalist conservatism.

Withal it is a worthy contribution to biographical writing and a sound interpretation of the era covered by the life of this semi-invalid (1745-1829). The style is popular, humorous, refreshing and challenging so that the reader is kept wide awake while he is being instructed in the intricacies of revolutionary politics and in entangled diplomacy. Jay himself was hardly interesting, but his career was most interesting because of his varied employments.

John Jay was well born, passed unscathed through King's College, then surrounded by houses of ill-fame, and was endowed with the family Huguenot heritage of a "consciousness of a background of persecution and of popish cruelty." Trained in the law in New York, he married a dominating Livingston, and was succeeding in his profession when the Revolution upset society. A cautious patriot, he was carried along by the times into Revolutionary committees, and entered politics. As a delegate to the Continental Congress, he was the chief framer of the Address to the People of Great Britain in which he pronounced his intense hostility to the Quebec Act: "Nor can we express our astonishment that a British Parliament should ever consent to establish in that country a religion that has deluged your island in blood, and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion through every part of the world." Yet the same hand aided in writing the appeal to Canada to join the rebellious colonies. He signed the Association and favored the Declaration of Independence. He obtained the chief justiceship of the state, and soon was honored with the presidency of the Continental Congress which sent him on the Spanish mission in the futile hope of winning an alliance and of obtaining military supplies and credit.

In Spain, Jay failed because of the intrigues and procrastination of the court and its corrupt ministers and because of his own unfitness for the assignment. Returning to New York, he labored for Negro emancipation, which was accomplished during his governorship, served as secretary for foreign affairs under the Articles of Confederation, and campaigned for the ratification of the Constitution.

Under Washington, he was a valuable counsellor and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, which gave him an opportunity to wear his honorary doctoral robe of Trinity College, Dublin, and to interpret the Constitution in

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the manner of his successor. Again a diplomat, he brought back his famous treaty from England to be condemned roundly and finally to be rewarded with two terms as governor. According to his biographer, he was a great governor, who made superb appointments, purified politics and promoted education as far as the controlling aristocracy permitted. In retirement, he lived happily though he saw his generation pass beyond, the rise of Jeffersonianism, Madison's war, the collapse of his Federalist party, the decline of the old ascendancy, and the construction of Catholic churches on Manhattan Island.

RICHARD J. PURCELL.

A Dram for the Will

Wake Up and Live!, by Dorothea Brande. New York: Simon and Schuster. $1.75.

THERE is something at once touching and inspiring in the enthusiasm with which human beings follow books on efficiency in living. Arnold Bennett's practical worldly wisdom, the cheerful self-hypnotism of Coué, Abbé Dimnet's gracious and philosophic lessons in the "Art of Thinking"—all these and more have captured public attention during the past few years. And now Dorothea Brande's treatment of the question has so promptly jumped into the best-seller class that it must obviously have fed some widespread hunger. Everybody at root, wants to wake up and live, and Mrs. Brande's approach to the subject is both sane and idealistic. She knows that most of us are in real danger of "slipping through the world" without making our contribution because we are somehow unable to muster for use "the most minute fraction of our abilities." And she believes that the reason for this is a subconscious "will to fail," which seems very like the much-discussed inferiority complex plus a fear of getting hurt and a certain amount of old-fashioned laziness. Hence her remedy is to train the mind to forget past pain and discouragement, or as she puts it in her key-sentence, to act as if it were impossible to fail.

There is, of course, nothing new in this courageous message. It has been for centuries the unconscious spur of all efficient action or the conscious theory of incentives to action. Every pioneering spirit has been motivated by it; and Dorothea Brande believes there might be more pioneering spirits among us if we made the thought our own. Catholic readers will find much in the book to which they should themselves be able to add an intensifying touch—the urge to meditation, to set times of silence, to a control of the imagination—and they will be likely to translate her suggested Twelve Disciplines into terms of a serviceable asceticism. Possibly some of us will question her identification of the "will to fail" and the "will to die," since the latter has so many mystical implications. But Mrs. Brande's concern is with the outer rather than the inner life, with psychology rather than spirituality, although she distinctly realizes the interrelation of the two. Altogether she makes a wise and sympathetic secular confessor and a stimulating director in the arts of everyday living.

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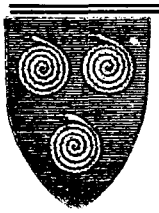
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Yeatsian Memories

Dramatis Personae, by W. B. Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

"DRAMATIS PERSONAE" is reminiscence, mood, philosophy and a book of wisdom. Yeats, recognizably a wise man, one of the Remnant, is thoroughly remarkable in this autobiographical volume. The part which is actually "Dramatis Personae" is eighty-two pages long and contains portraits of Lady Gregory, George Moore, Edward Martyn and Ireland in the years from 1896 to 1902. They are wonderful portraits. Then there are about eighty pages of notes from a journal, including the notes kept when Synge was dying, and the thoughtful diary of his trip to Sweden to receive the Nobel prize in 1925. "To oppose the new ill-breeding of Ireland," Yeats tells, "I can only set up a secondary or interior personality created out of the tradition of myself, and this personality (alas, only possible to me in my writings) must be always gracious and charming. It must have that slight separation from interests which makes charm possible, while remaining near enough for passion." The Yeats tradition is as great as any of today's writers and this book tells much about it. He carries maturity almost to the point of caricature; wisdom is almost attenuated at the peak, but on the way there is amazing fertility. He does not believe in argument or in scoring logical victories, and his outlook is built up in this book gradually, creatively, much by style. It is good and ruminative reading, with its interest, its humor, its final questions, its melancholy but not nostalgic tone and its intense mood.

An English Family

Antony: A Record of Youth, by the Earl of Lytton. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $3.00.

LETTERS from Antony Knebworth, who died in 1933 at the age of twenty-nine, to his father, the Earl of Lytton, form the large part of this intimate volume which discloses some of the most admirable qualities of English family life at its best. Life at Eton is described quite graphically, although Antony's reactions to Oxford are not particularly illuminating. A dashing young man's feelings for skiing, hunting and sport in general are strikingly conveyed. At times Antony was strongly drawn toward the Catholic Church. Best of all is the frankness with which Antony describes his inmost emotions, most searching doubts, and fondest aspirations. Judging from those included in this volume the letters his father penned in reply, filled with affection, paternal confidence and gentle admonition, reflects the encouragement of a model father.

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